

FABLES

no. 56

VERTIGO

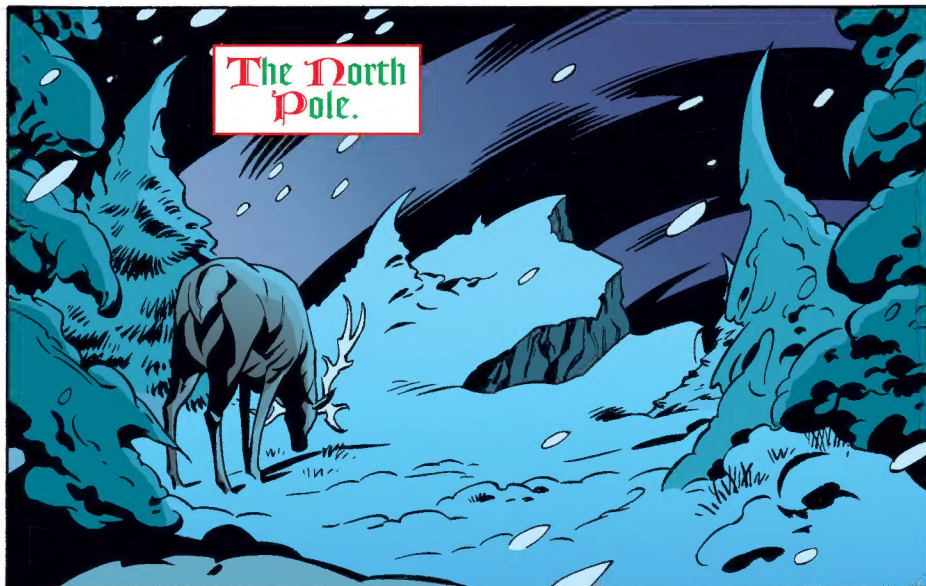
Willingham
Buckingham
Leialoha
Pepoy

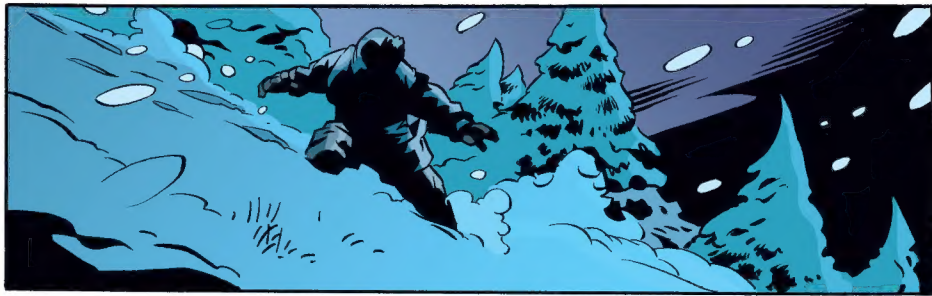
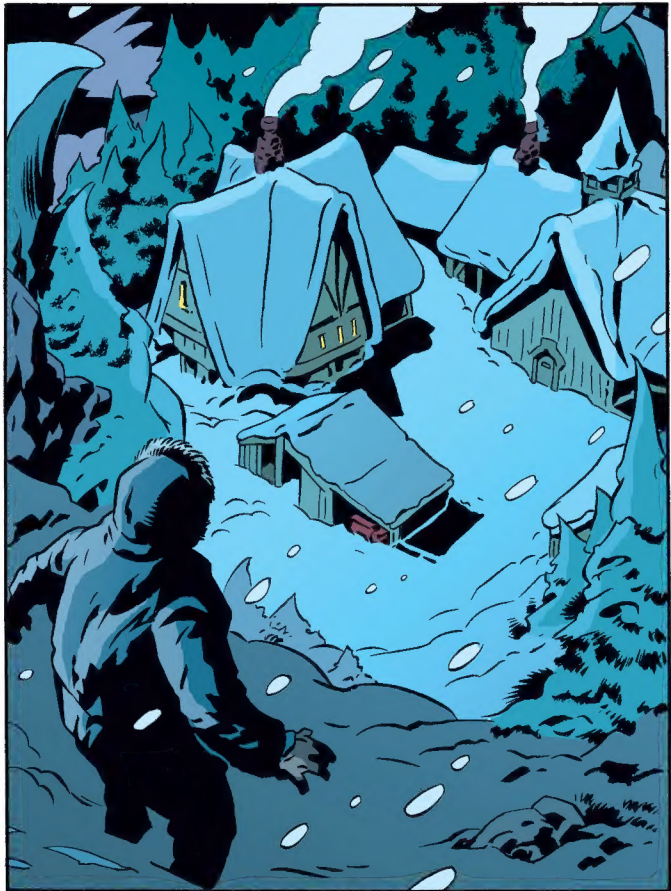
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SUGGESTED FOR
MATURE READERS
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Chapter One – December 22nd, 1956





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EXACTLY! I
THOUGHT I HEARD
SOME CREEPY LITTLE
VERMIN SKITTERING
AROUND DOWN
HERE.

BUT SINCE
WE DON'T HAVE
ACTUAL RATS
THIS FAR
NORTH...

WHAT
ARE YOU DOING
IN MY BASEMENT,
JACK?

YOU
KNOW WHAT
I'M AFTER, FAT
MAN.

THE
NAUGHTY AND NICE
LISTS!

THE
GREATEST
COMPENDIUM OF
JUVENILE CRIME
IN HUMAN
HISTORY!

AND EACH
ONE MY TICKET TO
WEALTH BEYOND
MEASURE!

NEW YORK
CITY, A
FEW DAYS
LATER.

AND
JUST WHAT DID
YOU EXPECT TO GET
AWAY WITH *THIS*
TIME, JACK?



EVEN IF YOU *COULD*'VE
GOTTEN AWAY WITH THEM, HOW
COULD YOU POSSIBLY BELIEVE THE
NAUGHTY AND NICE LISTS WOULD
MAKE YOU RICH?



USE YOUR
IMAGINATION,
SHERIFF.

THOSE BAD
KIDS ALL TEND TO GROW
UP INTO BAD ADULTS. AND
WHO MIGHT LIKE TO KNOW THEIR
IDENTITIES? THE *IRS* FOR
ONE. POLICE AGENCIES.
THE FEDS.



THE POSSIBILITIES ARE
ENDLESS. THEY'D ALL PAY TO
GET THE GOODS.

AND SINCE THE
LISTS ARE INTERNATIONAL,
I COULD SELL AND RESELL THEM
TO EVERY GOVERNMENT IN
THE WORLD.



WELL, YOU
FAILED--AS USUAL.
THE LISTS ARE
SAFE.



"Jimmy Christmas"

In which we pause amid the rapidly growing shadows of terrible things to come, just long enough to celebrate the joy of the holidays with some of our favorite **Fable** friends.

Today, just a few days before Christmas.

...AND A NEW BIKE, AND A RACE CAR SET, AND A SLED, AND A MIGHTY MIKE THE DANGER RANGER ACTION FIGURE, AND HIS PAL KARATE NINJA NOBU, AND..

Bill Willingham
writer-creator
Mark Buckingham
penciller

Steve Leialoha,
Mark Buckingham
& **Andrew Pepoy**
inkers
Lee Loughridge
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Todd Klein
letters
James Jean
cover
Angela Rufino
asst. ed.
Shelly Bond
editor

Chapter Two — Wolf Manor





WILL WE HAVE TO START OVER AGAIN, TO GET TO LEAVE THE FARM SOMEDAY?

NO, TODAY DOESN'T COUNT. YOU GET A ONE-TIME SPECIAL DISPENSATION WHILE DECORATING THE CHRISTMAS TREE.



SPECIAL DISHPANS? WE HAVE TO DO DISHES?

DISPENSATION. IT MEANS THIS ONE TIME IT DOESN'T COUNT AGAINST YOU. IT STILL COUNTS AS 17 DAYS ACTING TOTALLY HUMAN. ONLY 13 DAYS TO GO, STARTING AGAIN TOMORROW.



BUT THAT'S A GOOD IDEA. YOU UNRULY BRATS CAN HELP WITH THE DISHES, AFTER SUPPER.

NO FAIR, DAD! JUST BECAUSE THERESE MISUNDERSTOOD MOMMY? THERESE ALWAYS MISUNDERSTANDS!



I DO NOT!

ANOTHER DIRTY PARENT TRICK!

POOR OPPRESSED KIDS. NO ONE HAS EVER SUFFERED AS YOU DO.

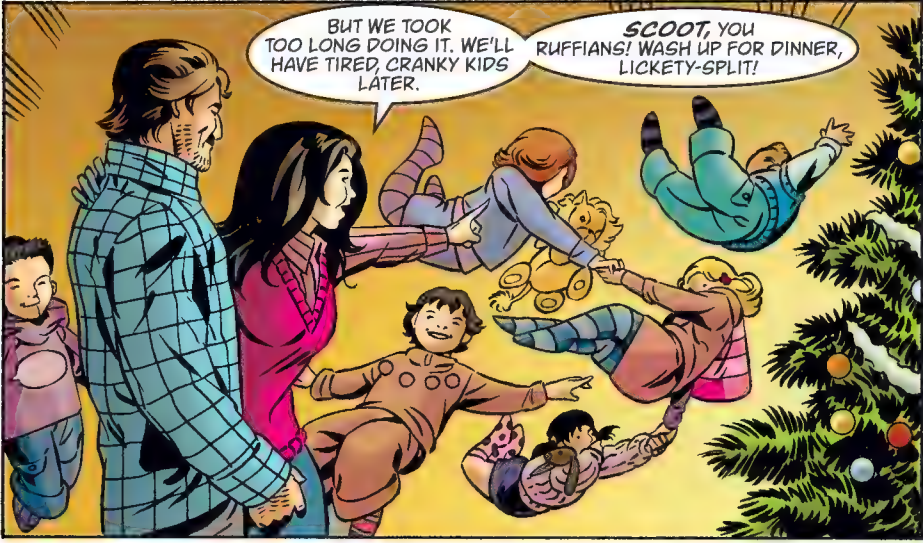


LOOKS PRETTY GOOD, HUH?

PERFECT.

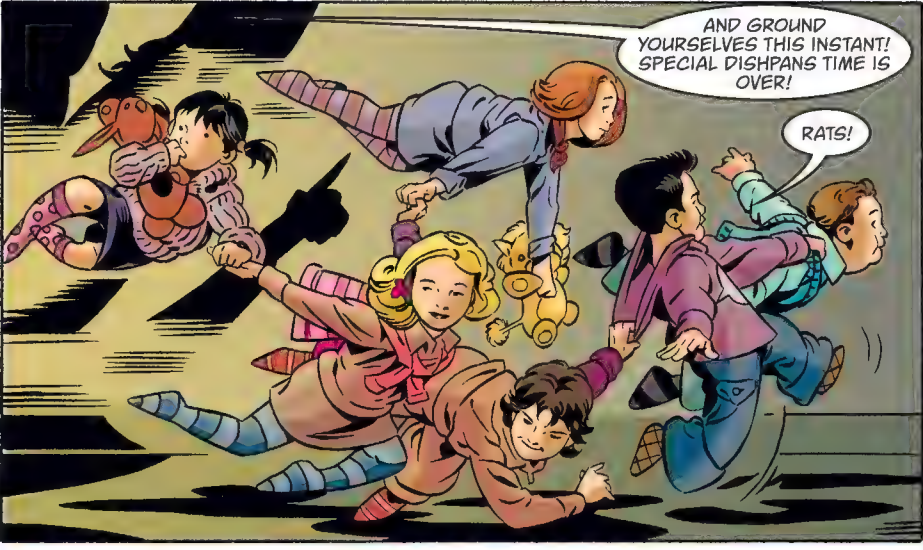
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BUT WE TOOK TOO LONG DOING IT. WE'LL HAVE TIRED, CRANKY KIDS LATER.

SCOOT, YOU RUFFIANS! WASH UP FOR DINNER, LICKETY-SPLIT!



AND GROUND YOURSELVES THIS INSTANT! SPECIAL DISHPANS TIME IS OVER!

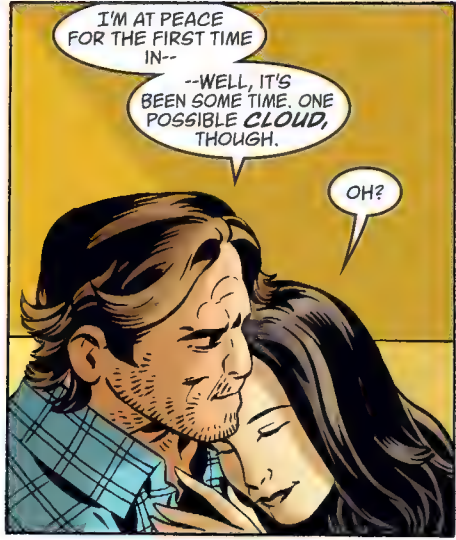
RATS!



OUR FIRST CHRISTMAS TOGETHER AS A COMPLETE FAMILY.

ARE YOU HAPPY, SNOW?

MORE SO THAN I EVER IMAGINED POSSIBLE. HOW ABOUT YOU?



I'M AT PEACE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN--

--WELL, IT'S BEEN SOME TIME. ONE POSSIBLE CLOUD, THOUGH.

OH?



MY ONLY EXCUSE IS THAT I'M OLD, SET IN MY WAYS AND COMPLETELY UNTRAINED FOR A LIFE OF DOMESTIC BLISS.

SPILL, WOLF MAN? WHAT'S THE TROUBLE?



IN ALL THE CHAOS OF GETTING READY FOR THIS SEASON I FORGOT TO ASK YOU WHAT YOU WANTED FOR CHRISTMAS.

IS THAT ALL? YOU HAD ME WORRIED, YOU JERK!



I'M HALFWAY SERIOUS HERE. I'VE KNOWN FOR MONTHS WHAT EACH OF THE MONSTERS WANT. THEY'VE DONE NOTHING BUT SCREAM IT FROM THE HIGH HEAVENS.

BUT YOU'VE MANAGED TO KEEP CURIOUSLY MUM.



FINE, IT'S A REASONABLY SERIOUS QUESTION. DO YOU WANT A SERIOUS ANSWER, THEN?

YES, PLEASE.

EVEN THOUGH IT MIGHT UPSET YOU?



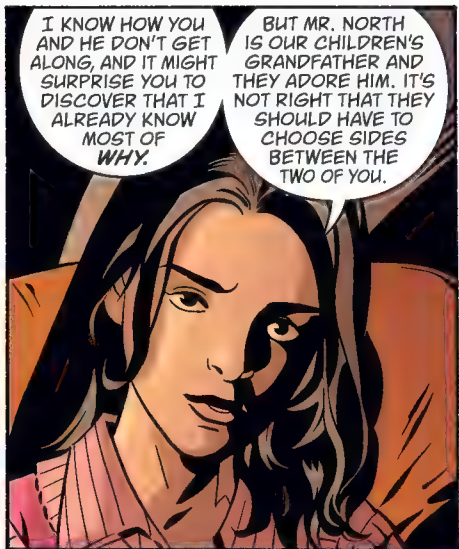
SNOW, I'LL GIVE YOU WHATEVER'S IN MY POWER TO GIVE.

OKAY, BUT REMEMBER YOU SAID THAT. I WANT US ALL TO GO BACK TO THE HOMELANDS, AS A FAMILY. NOT PERMANENTLY-- JUST FOR A VISIT.



SNOW,
IT'S NOT
SAFE--

NO, NOT TO
THE PARTS OVERRUN
BY THE ADVERSARY, BUT
TO THE DISTANT HIGH
MOUNTAINS, WHERE YOUR
FATHER HAS HIS
KEEP.



I KNOW HOW YOU
AND HE DON'T GET
ALONG, AND IT MIGHT
SURPRISE YOU TO
DISCOVER THAT I
ALREADY KNOW
MOST OF
WHY.

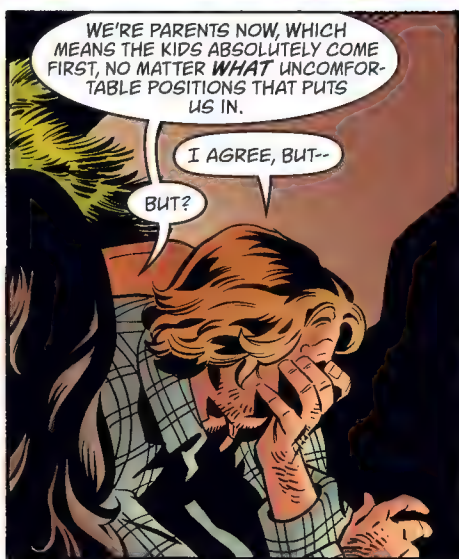
BUT MR. NORTH
IS OUR CHILDREN'S
GRANDFATHER AND
THEY ADORE HIM. IT'S
NOT RIGHT THAT THEY
SHOULD HAVE TO
CHOOSE SIDES
BETWEEN THE
TWO OF YOU.



BUT, SNOW,
HE'S A--

--HE'S
DONE TERRIBLE
THINGS!

SO HAVE
YOU AND SO HAVE
I. WE ALL HAVE OUR
PAST SINS. BUT THIS IS
WHAT I WANT AND THIS
IS WHAT YOUR CHILDREN
NEED.



WE'RE PARENTS NOW, WHICH
MEANS THE KIDS ABSOLUTELY
COME FIRST, NO MATTER *WHAT*
UNCOMFORTABLE POSITIONS THAT PUTS
US IN.

I AGREE, BUT--

BUT?



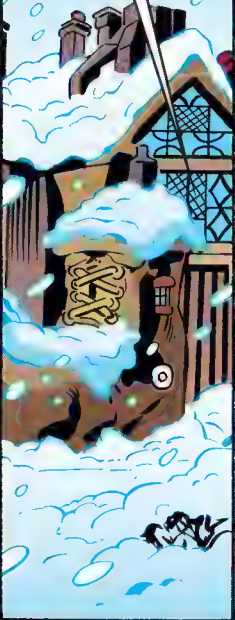
I'LL
THINK ABOUT
IT.



Chapter Three — The Rug

THE NEXT DAY...

GOOD MORNING, ROSE. WHAT'S THAT?



IT'S SOMETHING EVERYONE FORGOT WE HAD IN STORAGE UNTIL BUFKIN DUG IT OUT OF ONE OF THE DEEPER RECESSES OF THE BUSINESS OFFICE THE OTHER DAY.

IT LOOKS HEAVY. WANT A HAND?

SURE.



SNOW BROUGHT IT BACK FROM THE ARABIAN FABLE LANDS MANY, MANY MOONS AGO.

THEY SHIPPED IT UP HERE YESTERDAY TO USE AS A TAXI FOR GOING UP AND DOWN THE MAGIC BEANSTALK.



WHICH IS THE SAME MAGIC BEANSTALK YOU OFFICIALLY STILL KNOW NOTHING ABOUT.

SO KEEP YOUR YAP SHUT ABOUT IT, COMPRENDE, COWBOY?

ROGER THAT, RED.





IT'S A RUG?

A CARPET, A VERY SPECIAL ONE OF THE FLYING VARIETY.



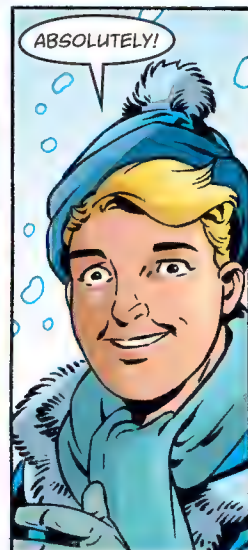
WOW! ARE WE GOING TO TRY IT?

ARE WE GOING TO TRY IT?

SOMEONE HAS TO LEARN HOW TO PILOT THIS THING.



CARE TO RISK LIFE AND LIMB HELPING ME FIGURE OUT HOW?



ABSOLUTELY!



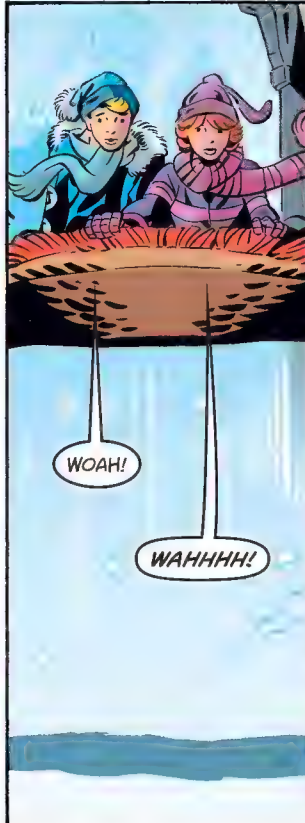
GOOD, BECAUSE I WAS WORRIED HOW I WAS GOING TO HAUL ALL OF THESE GIFTS OVER THE HIGH HILLS FOR MY LOVELY NEPHEWS AND NIECES IN WOLF VALLEY.

BUT THIS SHOULD DO THE TRICK, PROVIDED WE'RE ABLE TO SUSS IT OUT WITHOUT **KILLING OURSELVES.**



WHO CARES? IF WE BUY THE FARM, AT **LEAST** IT WILL HAVE BEEN FOR A GOOD CAUSE. READY TO GO?

YEP, RISE UP, MAGIC CARPET! RISE UP!





YAAHHHHHHH!

ROSE!
LET GO! LET
GO!



THE MORE
YOU PULL UP ON
THE *FRONT*, THE
FASTER IT
RISES!

WELL,
THAT'S A VERY
DANGEROUS AND
STUPID CONTROL
SYSTEM!



UH OH.
ANY IDEA HOW WE
GET BACK *DOWN*
AGAIN?



IT'S GOT TO DO
WITH WHERE YOU PULL OR
PRESS ON THE CARPET, BUT LET'S
BOTH AGREE HERE AND NOW TO
TRY VERY *SMALL* CHANGES
UNTIL WE'RE SURE HOW
TO DO THIS.

DEAL.



MUCH LATER THAT DAY...

OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS--



AUNTIE ROSE! AUNTIE ROSE!

YOU BROUGHT PRESENTS!

WHO FOR?

GREETINGS WOLFPACK! HO HO HO!

YOU'RE ON A FLYING CARPET!



SURE. YOU HOOLIGANS DIDN'T THINK YOU'RE THE ONLY ONES IN THIS CLAN WHO CAN FLY, DID YOU?

HOW DOES IT WORK?

SURPRISINGLY EASY, ONCE YOU GET THE HANG OF IT. MOSTLY JUST HOW YOU SHIFT YOUR WEIGHT.



COME IN OUT OF THE COLD, ALL OF YOU. YOU TWO WILL BE STAYING FOR SUPPER, OF COURSE. NO ARGUMENTS.

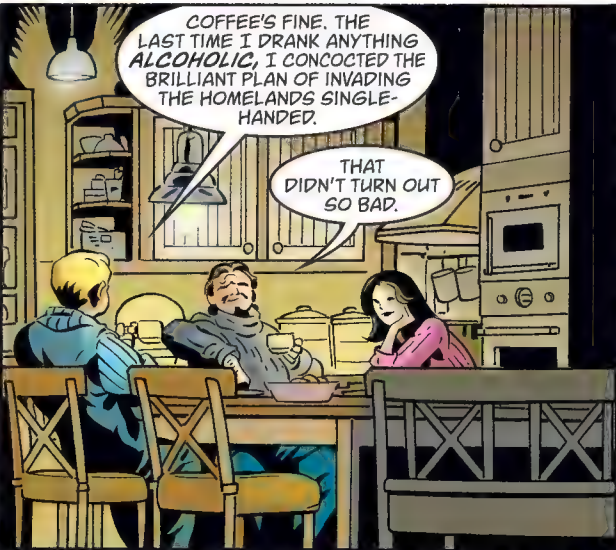
EVERYONE HELP CARRY SOMETHING INSIDE, BUT NO PEEKING, SHAKING OR ACCIDENTALLY RIPPING.



LATER THAT SAME EVENING...



MORE COFFEE, BLUE, OR ARE YOU READY FOR SOMETHING STRONGER?

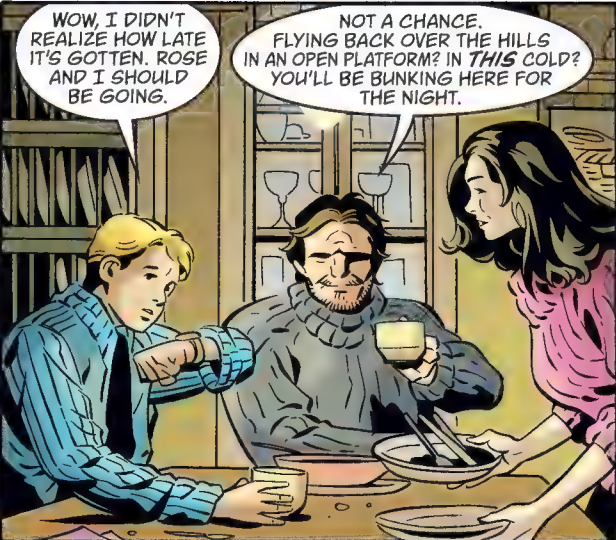


COFFEE'S FINE. THE LAST TIME I DRANK ANYTHING ALCOHOLIC, I CONCOCTED THE BRILLIANT PLAN OF INVADING THE HOMELANDS SINGLE-HANDED.

THAT DIDN'T TURN OUT SO BAD.

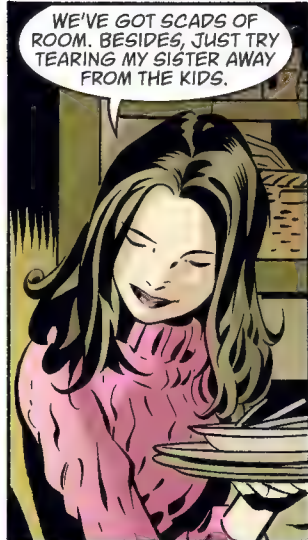


WELL, AS THE ONLY OTHER MEMBER OF THE FABLETOWN CHAPTER OF THE VERY EXCLUSIVE INVADERS OF THE HOMELANDS ON YOUR OWN CLUB, I'LL SIMPLY SAY: THANK YOU.

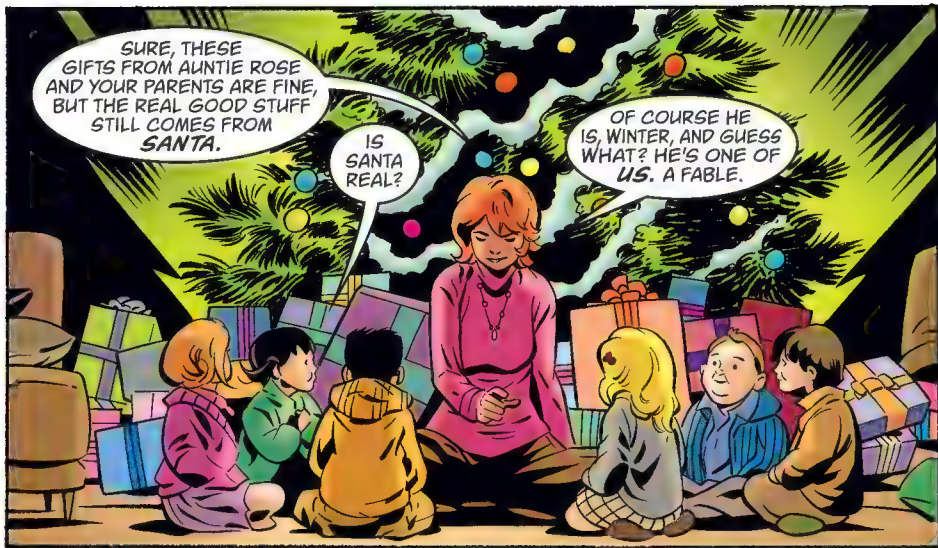


WOW, I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW LATE IT'S GOTTEN. ROSE AND I SHOULD BE GOING.

NOT A CHANCE. FLYING BACK OVER THE HILLS IN AN OPEN PLATFORM? IN *THIS* COLD? YOU'LL BE BUNKING HERE FOR THE NIGHT.



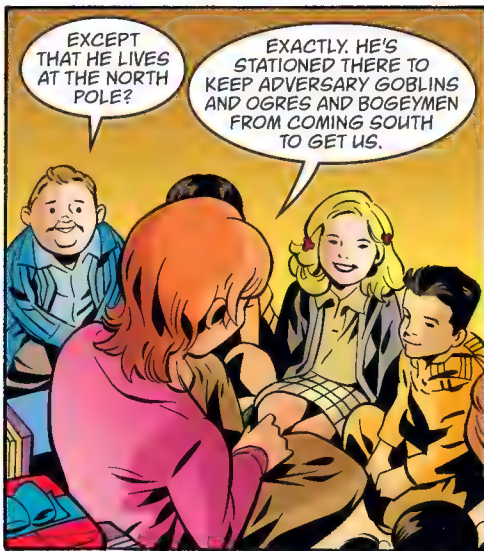
WE'VE GOT SCADS OF ROOM. BESIDES, JUST TRY TEARING MY SISTER AWAY FROM THE KIDS.



SURE, THESE GIFTS FROM AUNTIE ROSE AND YOUR PARENTS ARE FINE, BUT THE REAL GOOD STUFF STILL COMES FROM **SANTA**.

IS SANTA REAL?

OF COURSE HE IS, WINTER, AND GUESS WHAT? HE'S ONE OF **US**. A FABLE.



EXCEPT THAT HE LIVES AT THE NORTH POLE?

EXACTLY. HE'S STATIONED THERE TO KEEP ADVERSARY GOBLINS AND OGRES AND BOGEYMEN FROM COMING SOUTH TO GET US.



I'M GOING TO STAY UP ALL NIGHT AND SEE HIM!

ME TOO!



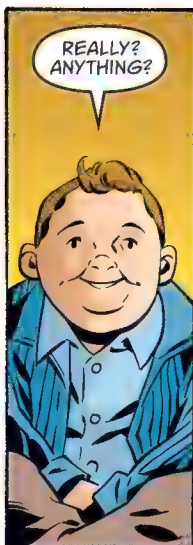
OKAY, DO THAT IF YOU WANT TO, BUT WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW **ANOTHER** BIG SECRET?



SURE!

YOU HAVE TO PROMISE NEVER, **EVER**, TO TELL ANYONE ELSE.

IF YOU DO STAY UP CHRISTMAS EVE AND CATCH SANTA WHILE HE'S IN YOUR HOUSE, HE HAS TO ANSWER **ONE** QUESTION. ANYTHING YOU ASK.



REALLY? ANYTHING?



ABSOLUTELY. BUT THERE'S A **COST**. IF YOU ASK HIM A QUESTION, THAT'S YOUR ONLY GIFT AND YOU DON'T GET ANY OTHER PRESENTS FROM HIM FOR THE WHOLE YEAR.

OH NO!

Chapter Four — The Question

The night before Christmas...

THEN WE'RE ALL AGREED?

ONLY ONE OF US WILL STAY UP TO SEE SANTA AND ASK HIM A QUESTION

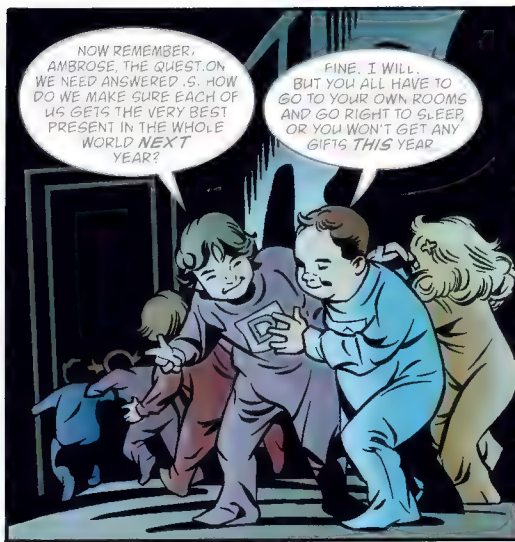
AND THE REST OF US *PROMISE* TO SHARE OUR PRESENTS WITH THE ONE WHO DIDN'T GET ANY.

UNLESS I'M CHOSEN AND YOU GIRLS GET DOLLS. I DON'T NEED TO PLAY WITH NO DOLLS.

EXCEPT DOCTOR VESUVIUS, AND MADAM SLITHER, AND MIGHTY MIKE, AND...

THOSE ARE *ACTION FIGURES!* NOT DOLLS!

SHHHH. EVERYONE DRAW A STRAW. SHORT STRAW GOES.



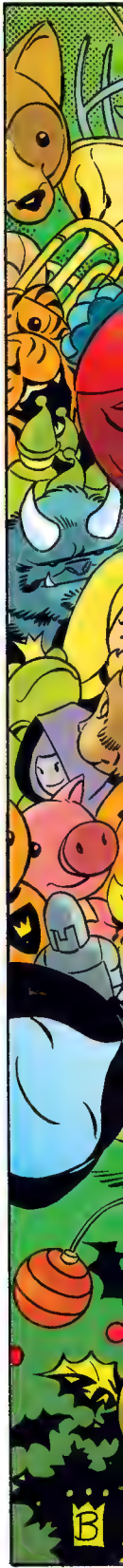




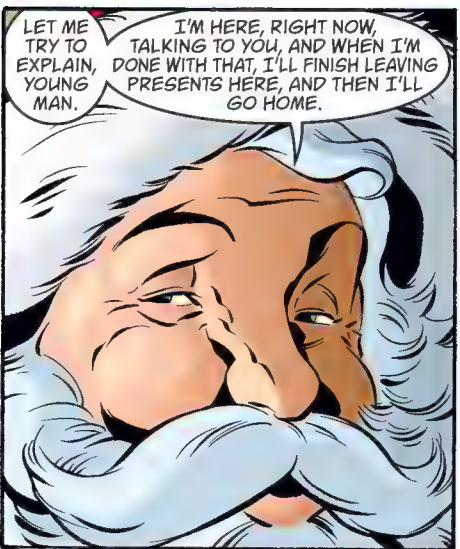
JIMINY CHRISTMAS!

YOU'RE REAL!

OH, LITTLE AMBROSE. WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP SO LATE?









"BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I'M ALSO AT YOUR AUNTIE ROSE'S HOUSE, LEAVING GIFTS FOR HER AND MR. BLUE.



"AND I'M ALSO NEXT DOOR, GIVING MUSTARD POT PETE A NICE SELECTION OF JELLIES, AND A NEW SET OF PENS FOR STINKY THE BADGER.



"AND I'M ALSO STANDING IN THE SNOW OUTSIDE OF REYNARD'S DEN, LEAVING HIM HIS FRESH HOT CHRISTMAS PIES.



"AND I'M IN A HOLLYWOOD MANSION, LEAVING A LUMP OF COAL IN THAT RASCAL JACK HORNER'S STOCKING."



Chapter Five — The Answer

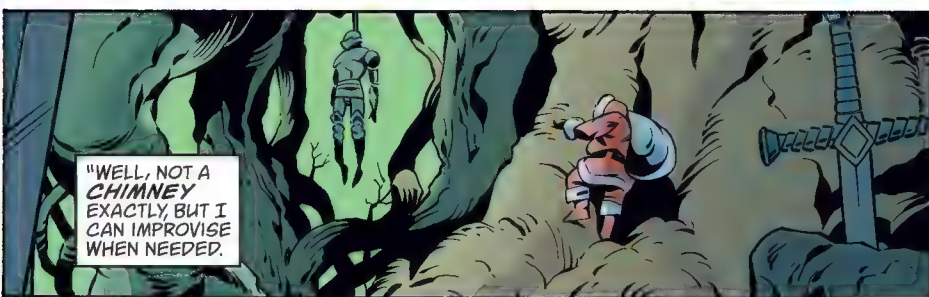
"AND I'M ALSO
IN FABLETOWN.



"CLIMBING DOWN
THEIR CHIMNEY.



"WELL, NOT A
CHIMNEY
EXACTLY, BUT I
CAN IMPROVISE
WHEN NEEDED.

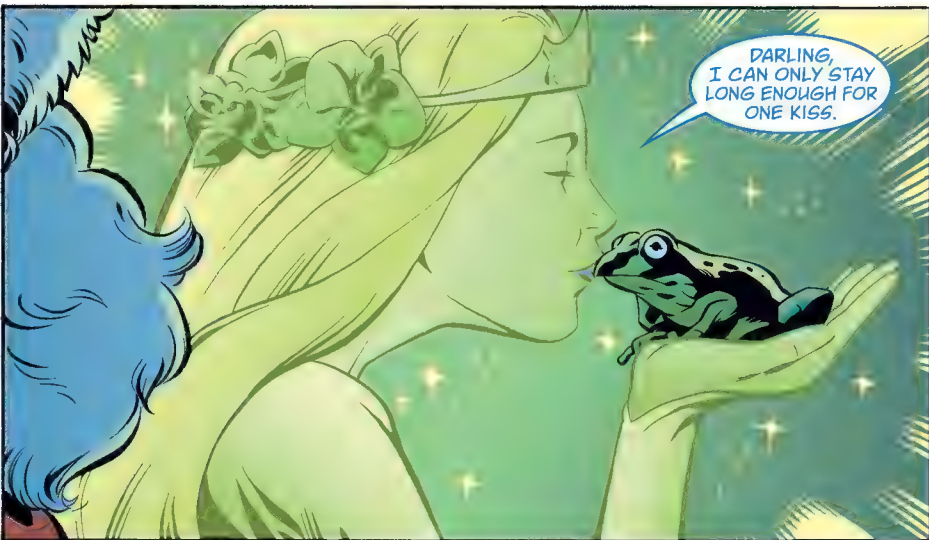


"I'M THERE TO VISIT
ANOTHER FELLOW
NAMED AMBROSE--
THE ONE YOU WERE
NAMED AFTER."

GOOD
EVENING, FLY.
YOU'RE AWAKE
I SEE.

Ribbit.









BUT--

I DON'T KNOW ANY MORE THAN THAT. BUT YOU'LL KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN THE TIME COMES.

PROVIDED YOU'RE WILLING TO PUT AWAY CHILDISH THINGS AND TAKE UP A MAN'S BURDENS AGAIN.



GOODBYE, AMBROSE. I WISH THIS COULD HAVE BEEN A BETTER HOLIDAY FOR YOU.



AND AT THE SAME TIME I'M IN EUROPE AND CHINA AND DARKEST AFRICA AND EVERY MUNDY HOUSE IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD--OR EVERY ONE THAT STILL BELIEVES, ANYWAY.



DO YOU UNDERSTAND NOW?

I THINK I DON'T, BUT MAYBE I DO.

AND I THINK YOU'RE TIRED AND NEED TO GET TO BED, BEFORE BIG BAD WOLVES CATCH YOU SNEAKING AROUND IN THE NIGHT.

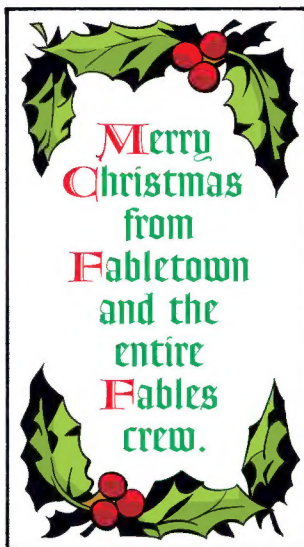


MERRY CHRISTMAS, YOUNG AMBROSE.

G'NIGHT, SANTA.

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BILL WILLINGHAM

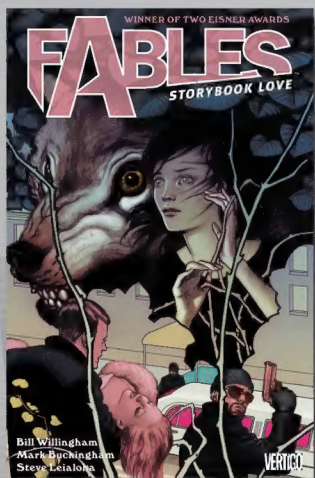
"[A] wonderfully twisted concept... features fairy tale characters banished to the noirish world of present-day New York."
– THE WASHINGTON POST



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- VOL. 2: ANIMAL FARM
- VOL. 3: STORYBOOK LOVE
- VOL. 4: MARCH OF THE WOODEN SOLDIERS
- VOL. 5: THE MEAN SEASONS
- VOL. 6: HOMELANDS
- VOL. 7: ARABIAN NIGHTS (AND DAYS)
- VOL. 8: WOLVES
- VOL. 9: SONS OF EMPIRE
- VOL. 10: THE GOOD PRINCE
- VOL. 11: WAR AND PIECES
- VOL. 12: THE DARK AGES
- VOL. 13: THE GREAT FABLES CROSSOVER
- 1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



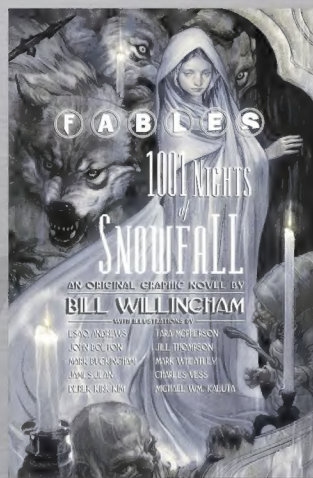
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STORYBOOK LOVE



FABLES VOL. 6:
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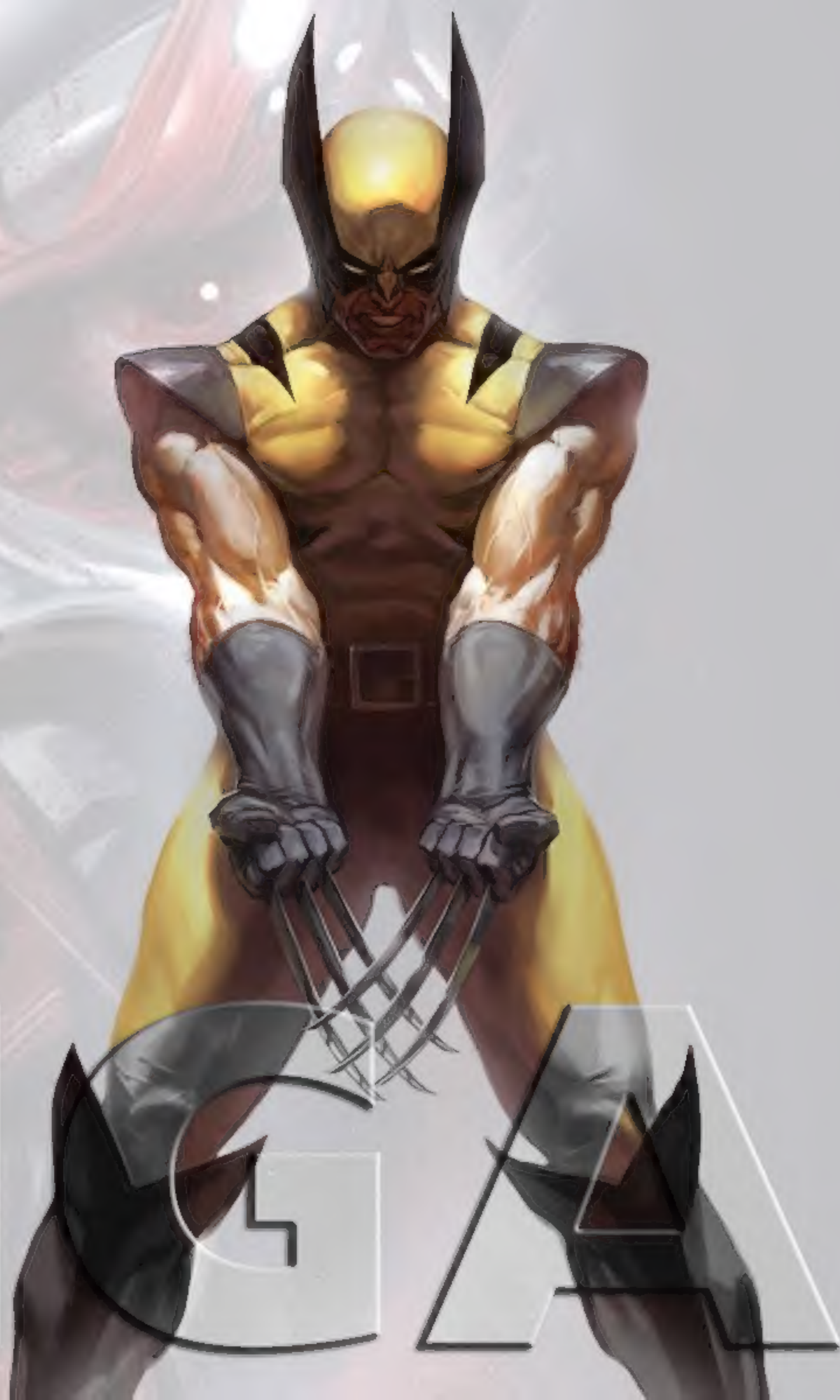


FABLES:
1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



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